DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 334 885 HE 024 678

AUTHOR Gardner, John; And Others
TITLE Guidelines for Evaluating the Freshman Year Experience.
INSTITUTION South Carolina Univ., Columbia. Center for the Study of the Freshman Year Experience.
PUB DATE 90
NOTE 12p.
AVAILABLE FROM National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience, 1728 College Street, Columbia, SC 29208 ($5.00).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; Academic Advising; *College Freshmen; Dormitories; Extracurricular Activities; Group Experience; Guidelines; Higher Education; Inquiry; *Institutional Evaluation; Institutional Research; School Orientation; School Policy; *Student Adjustment; *Student College Relationship; *Student Needs; Student Recruitment; *Summative Evaluation; Transitional Programs

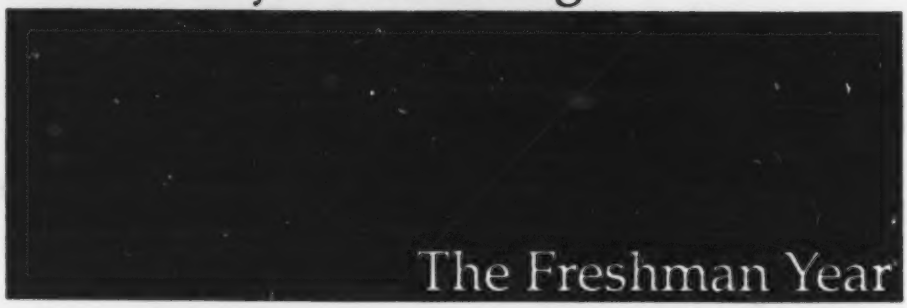
ABSTRACT

This booklet presents questions that can be used by a college or university task force looking at the freshman year experience and/or the broader undergraduate experience. It can also be utilized to aid the process of campus self-study or assessment. The questions are arranged under three major headings: (1) Campus Policies, Processes, and Climate; (2) Academics; and (3) Student Life and Campus Services. Questions are presented under the following subheadings: recruitment/admissions; orientation; institutional research and resources; development of common culture and community; institutional policies and goals for the freshman year; the formal curriculum; faculty and staff development; academic advising and tutorial assistance; residence life; student activities and campus services; and campus problems and issues. (GLR)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED334885

Guidelines for Evaluating



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

University of South Carolina

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

HE 024 678

National Center for the Study
of The Freshman Year Experience

The University of South Carolina

Copyright 1990 by the National Center for the Study of The Freshman Year Experience. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or copied in any form, by any means, without written permission from the National Center for the Study of The Freshman Year Experience, the University of South Carolina.

The Freshman Year Experience is a composite of many events, structures, and processes—both intentional and unintentional—that are common, yet unique on American campuses. The following blueprint of questions can be used by a college or university task force looking at the freshman year experience and/or the broader undergraduate experience. It can also be utilized to aid the process of campus self-study or assessment.

Campus policies, processes, and climate

Recruitment/admissions

What are prospective first year students told during the process of recruitment and admissions? Does the institution keep its recruitment promises?

Are campus employees at all levels made aware of what new freshmen have been led to expect, and are they prepared to deliver on such expectations?

Orientation

Does the institution have a well-developed, intentional process of student orientation?

How is orientation evaluated, by whom, and what use is made of that evaluation?

Are faculty, student affairs staff, and outstanding upper class students involved in orientation?

Is there any mechanism for accomplishing "extended" or "continuing" orientation after the initial academic term begins (e.g., as in a freshman orientation course)?

Within a comprehensive orientation program, are there special segments for unique homogeneous student populations?

Is the institution active in the National Orientation Directors Association?

Institutional research and resources

What kind of institutional demographic data base is available on freshmen? How is that information used other than in standard governmental reporting?

Does the institution systematically monitor retention/attrition rates, and if so, by what variables?

Does the institution know why some students leave before graduation and where they go (transfer vs. dropout)?

Does the institution have a profile of those freshmen who are likely to be retained versus those who are likely to drop out?

Does the institution's library maintain up-to-date holdings of books and periodicals relative to the freshman year?

Development of common culture and community

Do campus rituals, ceremonies, special functions or receptions celebrate the arrival of freshmen?

Are there common activities throughout the freshman year that build a strong sense of campus community and impart campus values?

Institutional policies and goals for the freshman year

To what extent is the top administrative leadership of the institution involved with freshmen? Do the president, chief academic officer, chief student personnel officer, etc. welcome students to campus, participate in orientation, teach or lecture in a freshman seminar?

Is there an effective partnership between faculty, academic administrators, and student affairs administrators? Specifically, are student affairs personnel full participants in institutional priority setting, and are curricular and co-curricular programs integrated?

Can the institution identify individuals, faculty or staff, who have been champions or advocates for freshmen? Do these individuals receive positive recognition from their peers and are they rewarded for their accomplishments?

Does the institution have a freshman council comprised of students to provide feedback and make recommendations to faculty and administrators about the freshman year?

Has the institution defined what is meant by "freshman success"? Relative to this definition, what should freshmen experience and how can this be assured? What kinds of resources are necessary to facilitate these experiences, and are those resources available and allocated to support freshmen?

What kinds of seniors does the institution hope to graduate, and how does the freshman year experience lay the foundation for desired student outcomes?

Academics

The formal curriculum

What is the nature of the freshman curriculum? Are there any integrated academic experiences that attempt to present and explain the value of core curricula, general education, or the liberal arts? Is there some academic experience that is shared by and common to all freshmen?

Using the concept developed by the National Institute of Education's 1984 report, *Involvement in Learning*, to what extent has the institution "front loaded" the academic experience assuring that freshmen have access to the best courses taught by the most respected (and most senior) faculty?

Is writing across the curriculum an intentional component of the academic freshman year experience?

When, how, and by whom are freshman students taught to use the library? How effective is this instruction?

Does the institution offer or require a freshman seminar course? Do faculty receive training to teach this course? Is the effectiveness of the course assessed according to established goals?

Faculty and staff development

Are faculty/staff development training programs available and/or required to enhance instruction and student support during the freshman year?

Has the institution identified courses and faculty that are "high risk" for unsuspecting students? Is there an "early warning" system for students in these classes?

What is the current reward system for those primarily responsible for the freshman experience? For example, do teaching and/or advising freshmen count toward tenure and promotion?

If departments make use of graduate teaching assistants, what kinds of training or supervision are provided for them? Do international teaching assistants have sufficient English language skills? How

are these skills determined, monitored, and/or improved?

Academic advising and tutorial assistance

What is the current state of academic advising?

Is there training of academic advisors, and how does the institution reward them?

Does the institution have an early warning alert system to spot freshmen in early academic difficulty and to refer them for appropriate counseling and other types of support?

Does the institution have some kind of learning assistance skills center that makes extensive use of trained developmental educators, professional and peer tutors?

Is the institution active in the National Association for Academic Advising?

Student Life and Campus Services

Residence life

What does the institution know about the quality of residence life for freshmen?

What kind of programming is done exclusively for freshmen?

How are freshman residential students integrated successfully with upperclass students?

What kind of selection and training process exists for resident assistants?

Student activities and campus services

To what extent and through what mechanisms are freshmen, both resident and commuter, encouraged to get involved in co-curricular activities, such as student government, campus publications, Greek life, campus clubs, leadership training, etc.?

Are freshmen intentionally made aware of campus resources such as career counseling, personal counseling, student health services, fitness programs and facilities, etc.

What efforts have been made to identify unique homogeneous populations of freshmen within the freshman class (i.e., commuting, adult, disabled, and international students,etc.). What special policies or programs are available to support these students?

How successfully are commuting students integrated into the life of the institution?

Campus problems and issues

Has the institution identified particular issues or campus problems of concern to freshmen (i.e., cultural diversity, drug and alcohol use, sexually transmitted diseases, vandalism in the residence halls, rape awareness, etc?) Have resources been committed to addressing and/or alleviating these concerns?

Does the campus offer freshmen a structured forum, such as a freshman seminar, within which to discuss such issues?

These guidelines have been developed by John Gardner and staff members of the National Center for the Study of The Freshman Year Experience. User comments and suggestions are welcome.

National Center for the Study of The Freshman Year Experience
University 101
The University of South Carolina
1728 College Street
Columbia, SC 29208